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The Theft

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THE THEFT.

Lord Eros feasted day and night.
 About his palace on the height
 All men, as ne'er before or since,
 Yielded their hearts unto their prince.
 The land reposed: o'er plain and mart
 A faery glow seem'd won from art,
 And fill'd the sunshine and the wind;
 And from new stores the human mind
 Renew'd old hopes despaired of long,
 Till each man seemed to speak in song.
 Some birth-tide of news gods might seem
 Come on that realm: but 'tis no dream,
 But tru'h, in sober annals told,
 That the Muse in that reign of gold
 Came down, as joy falls unawares
 In bosoms freed from coward cares,
 Dispersing all the walls of doubt
 Which seem to cage men round about,
 And lock them in with use and wont.
 So passed the years—till some affront
 Vext the high Muse, who in the hall
 Rose wrathful up and left them all,
 Nor would return—how so the King
 Might swear that she should come and sing.
 Great anger show'd Lord Eros then,
 And, rising, went before all men
 Unto her tower, and to his car
 Dragged her, and bore her thence afar,
 And cast into a dungeon grim
 Because she would not sing for him.

Beyond his realm that castle lay
 High up in crags: and as men say,
 His chariot having come to wrack
 He took on foot the journey back.
 The morn was May; the birds all talk'd
 As thro' the land Lord Eros walk'd,
 Bright as a cloud; along the road
 The flowery tribes so thickly stood,
 It seem'd, thro' every vale and mead,
 Word of his coming must have spread.
 Till noon a heavy silence made,
 And in a place where shadows play'd
 And hidden waters fell, he sank
 Down in the grass, and on a bank
 Pillow'd his golden head, and slept,
 While softly around the breezes crept.

So chanc'd, a poet, as the day
 From noon wore onward, by that way
 Came angry, all his thoughts intent
 Upon the Muse's banishment.
 Himself he now would vanish too:
 For what to the poetic few
 Is life, and place in Eros' realm,
 Wanting the Muse's grace with them?
 Madness and error, toil and waste!
 From such a life while he made haste,
 Him did a sudden turning bring
 Full on the sleep-disarmour'd King!
 All in the quiet of the wood
 A little while the poet stood
 And view'd the tyrant in his power;
 And but that bards at every hour

Are weaponless and harmless men,
 It had gone ill with Eros then!
 What poet his liege-lord could slay?
 But since beside the sleeper lay,
 Slung from his waist, an iron key,
 The poet loos'd it stealthily,
 Seiz'd it and fled—and as before
 Sported the breezes evermore.

So lies the riddle! Solve it they
 Who things reveal'd to babes can say!
 Lord Eros woke and missed the key,
 A little mused—but what cared he!
 How hard that pri-on-door to tell,
 How safe the secret, he knew well!
 So fared he to the citadel;
 Where nightly, in the Muse's chair,
 Sate now his earthly cousin, Care,
 Of restless eye and doleful tongue—
 That often, by dear memories stung,
 Lord Eros goes apart and weeps,
 Yet still in wrath his secret keeps.
 And the sad bard no more may sing,
 But walks life's pathways questioning,
 And spite of blame, disdain, abuse,
 Still seeks, with little hope, the Muse.
 Old doors of ancient mysteries,
 And old austere philosophies,
 And temple-gates forlorn, he tries.
 Perchance, where she is prison'd fast,
 Unconscious often he has pass'd;
 Where she, beyond her prison-bars,
 Finds peace with the returning stars,
 Or vainly in that dungeon pent
 Soars far beyond imprisonment!
 Heaven aid the poet's search, we pray,
 And speed him on his troubled way!
 But in what lock his key shall turn,
 From Eros only shall he learn.

JOHN EGLINTON.

Go on and prosper! I like the calm dignity of
 "the little paper." Though I am, comparatively
 speaking, only a young shaver, I feel that we—you
 and I—are life long friends.

H. D. F.

Thanks, H. D. F. So be it.—Ed.

ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

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